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(54) Title: A NEW ROUTE TO  $\alpha$ - TOCOPHERYL ALKANOATES AND PERCURSORS THEROF

(57) Abstract: The present invention is concerned with a novel process for the manufacture of 4alkanoxy-2,3,5-trimethylphenyl (E/Z)-phytyl ethers, precursors of  $\alpha$ -tocopheryl alkanoates, by cross-metathesis reaction of alkenyl ethers of 1-alkanoxy-2,3,6-trimethylhydroquinone with 2,6,10,14-tetramethylpentadecene or a phytol derivative, e.g. an ester, an ether or a silyl ether, in the presence of a cross-metathesis catalyst. As the crossmetathesis catalyst especially ruthenium metal carbene complexes are suitable which possess (a) ruthenium metal center(s), have an electron count of 16 or 18 and are penta- or hexa- coordinated. A further object of the invention is a process for the manufacture of  $\alpha$ tocopheryl alkanoates comprising this reaction.

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